



## **Housing Plan Implementation Committee**

Date: July 1, 2021  
Time: 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM  
Location: Conducted via remote participation

### **Attendees**

Committee: Lenard Diggins, Karen Kelleher, Jonathan Nyberg, Patricia Worden  
Consultants: Judi Barrett, Alexis Lanzillotta  
Staff: Jennifer Raitt, Erin Moriarty  
Guests: Don Seltzer, Rebecca Gruber

### **Minutes**

1. Introductions
  - a. Arlington's new Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development, Erin Moriarty, introduced herself to the committee and indicated she would be staffing future meetings of the HPIC.
  - b. Jennifer Raitt indicated that Pam Hallett has vacated her position on the HPIC bringing the committee to six members in total.
2. Housing Plan
  - a. Summary of focus group interviews
    - i. Representatives from Barrett Consulting Group presented an update on the feedback gathered thus far from 16 focus group interviews consisting of 54 total participants over three days representing various departments and organizations across the community. The format of the interviews consisted of open-ended questions and facilitated discussion.
    - ii. Follow-up from the small group interviews was provided in a Google Form document that was shared digitally with participants to ensure input was not limited due to meeting format. Responses followed similar patterns and included themes such as strong roots, quality of schools, distrust, cost of living, development, density, and housing.
  - b. Summary of forum and breakout group discussions
    - i. The community forum was held June 9<sup>th</sup> 2021 to gather input from the wider community not yet captured in the small group interviews. The meeting format consisted of break-out groups where participants spent around 20 minutes in each group before moving to a new group and discussion point. Themes of discussion

included the planning process and communication, relationships with developers, use of funds, zoning, and accommodating change in the built environment.

- ii. Following the community forum another Google Form was made available for further comments which received input from 7 respondents, all who attended the community forum. Responses indicated there was a lack of consensus as well as room for education around several facets of housing and development in Arlington.
- c. Housing needs assessment
  - i. Judi and Alexis of Barret Consulting presented several rounds of data and analysis as part of their housing needs assessment. Sources of data were primarily the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) and the American Community Survey. Findings from this analysis will help to guide recommendations for the plan moving forward. Themes of this data and analysis included cost-burdened household trends, financial characteristics by household type, median sale prices for homes, housing units by type, and percent housing units by year built.
  - ii. Questions and Comments
    1. Karen Kelleher asked for clarity regarding the “Other” category within the cost-burdened household trends due to its apparent significance and requested a breakout of that category to further evaluate the data.
    2. Lenard Diggins requested more info regarding the cost-burdened household trends to know when homeowners purchased their homes to evaluate the relation of rising home equity and cost-burden.
    3. Jonathan Nyberg requested the average age of all survey participants, as participant responses could skew the data. He acknowledged that zoning laws and the price of land are current barriers to affordable and senior housing. Alexis addressed Jonathan’s initial survey question, confirming that demographics of respondents was collected and will continue to be in future engagement touchpoints.
    4. Karen emphasized that racial equity is an important part of this plan and she requested some data or graphics to help visualize this challenging issue such as a map of regional segregation for race and income, and demographic data of the town. Karen suggested the group solicit input from communities of color and their advocates and affordable housing developers. She would like to hear from some of the

many affordable housing developers who are working in Massachusetts but not building or acquiring in Arlington, what would bring them to this community.

Jenny commented that the Fair Housing Action Plan has some of the data and graphics Karen was requesting for racial equity and income already available for consumption.

5. Patricia Worden commented that the cost of schools was lacking from the presentation and noted that the Town of Arlington has a relatively low amount of industrial development relative to other communities in the region. Jenny confirmed that the list of comparable communities in the dataset is the same dozen used by Town Manager's office.

d. Engagement plan for summer

i. Meeting in a Box

1. Judi explained the concept of hosting focus groups via the meeting in a box. The results will be included in the total plan community engagement. Len offered to reach out to Town Meeting members for precinct meetings. Karen suggested outreach to groups such as food pantries to reach the sectors of the population most in need of affordable housing options. Judi offered a training video to help guide those sponsoring a meeting in a box.

Meeting guest Rebecca from Envision Arlington's Diversity Taskforce offered to facilitate meetings in a box and connect to more local organizations.

ii. Farmer's Market

1. Judi explained opportunities to talk to residents at the Arlington Farmer's Market using supporting materials. Karen suggested a similar set up be used at the food pantry and/or the Thompson School to capture the opinions of more renters and residents of affordable housing.

iii. July 13 Community Conversation: Who Can Live Here, Who Decides, and Why?

1. Judi explained the paneled presentation that would take place on the topic of Fair Housing.

3. Announcements/Reminders

- a. Community Conversation: Who Lives Here, Who Decides, & Why? 7/13 at 7:00pm. Register at:

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/27253/6167>

- b. Positions on Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees.

Information on applying available at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/i-want-to/join-a-committee>

- i. Jenny announced that the Town is still accepting applications for this Board and has received minimal applications to date. The process for applying includes an interview with Jenny Raitt and Erin Moriarty followed by an appointment process of the selected individuals.
  - ii. Patricia requested that the members of the public on the meeting have a chance to speak. Len requested more housing research for the region from the consultant including topics related to wages and hard data.
- 4. Minutes from May 6
  - a. Postponed until the next meeting due to time constraints.
- 5. Open forum
  - a. Meeting guest Don Shafer shared his interest in the cost earning information and is interested in seeing the percent of data for subsidized housing. Jenny explained that the dataset used at this meeting, CHAS, is a very specific dataset that doesn't necessarily include all aspects or cross references as might be required for analysis.
- 6. Next Committee Meeting
  - a. Jenny requested an attendance check for the upcoming meeting scheduled August 5<sup>th</sup>, Erin to follow up with the committee. Future meetings listed as: August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4, and December 2, 2021.

Motion to adjourn: Karen; Second: Jonathan. Meeting adjourned 9:16PM